MEAP ONLINE TEST PROGRAM – YEAR TWO
MICHIGAN'S 6TH and 7th GRADE STUDENTS – OCTOBER 2006
Online Assessment in
Grade 6: English Language Arts and Social Studies
Grade 7: Mathematics and English Language Arts

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is MEAP online testing? All of the test items on the 6th Grade English Language Arts and Social Studies tests and 7th Grade Mathematics and English Language Arts will be prepared so that they can be administered by computer using test administration software delivered over the Internet. The software for the online MEAP assessment will be provided under contract with Pearson Educational Measurement (PEM). The software that is downloaded onto the student's computer is called TestNav (see http://etest.ncs.com for more information). Mathematics assessments will be administered by the traditional paper and pencil method. MEAP Mathematics material will be ordered in the usual manner. We are working with the contractor to develop an online delivery method for obtaining figure drawings and mathematical notations for the constructed response items for future assessments.

Students will be registered for the online assessment in the same manner as they are for Pre-Id on the printed MEAP test. Test administrators will have control over electronic testing sessions and students taking the online tests. To maintain test security, students will have a user-id and password that will allow them to take a particular test. For any school that volunteers, all students will take the multiple choice part of the exam using the same questions and question order as in the MEAP printed test booklet. No test information, items or scores will be left on the student's computer after test delivery is complete.

What level of keyboarding skills are expected? Students should be familiar with the computer they will be using and should have keyboard skills sufficient to enter a one page typed answer to an essay question in a reasonable and comfortable length of time. The program includes a simple editing system that is easy to use. Students will not have to use a more complicated word processor and will not have to worry about formatting beyond paragraphs. In keeping with MEAP administration rules, there will be no spelling or grammar check built-in to the software nor will it be allowed to be used during the test.

We expect that schools that volunteer will test 90 - 95% of all students in that building using online testing. We are allowing for 5 - 10% of students that may be unable to respond using the keyboard to take the exam on paper and pencil.

Who can take the MEAP online? Thanks to a successful pilot program last year of MEAP online by 6th grade students participating in the Ferris State University Freedom to Learn Program, the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) is pleased to offer a limited number of opportunities for students to take the MEAP online

assessment for 6th Grade English Language Arts, and Social Studies and 7th Grade Mathematics and English Language Arts.

All Freedom to Learn schools are eligible to participate in addition to any school that can meet the technology requirements. Volunteer schools will be placed on a list on a first come, first served basis. Once the allowable limit of 5,000 students per grade has been reached, no more volunteers will be allowed to participate in the online testing.

What are the technical requirements? There must be a sufficient number of computers within the school (individual laptops or lab configurations) to test all students within the regular MEAP testing cycle. PEM services will check your software and hardware configuration for compatibility and provide technical support throughout the testing process. The online testing software, TestNav, works with most PC and Mac configurations that schools currently use. You must have a broadband connection and bandwidth is dependent on the number of students being tested. There are detailed infrastructure requirements available for download at http://etest.ncs.com/InfrastructureGuidelines.pdf.

Will student and district results be confidential? All student information will remain confidential.

What are the accommodations?   The audio accommodations for ELL and students with disabilities will be available for Social Studies.

Has online high stakes testing been tried before? Online testing has been around for more than 20 years. It is currently being used by several states for NCLB-level assessment. Some states are already doing all student testing online (Oregon and Wyoming). Michigan had a successful trial of the program last year. And more than a six states are offering some form of online testing. We want to continue to be at the forefront of this developing trend. Schools that participate in this testing will gain valuable experience with the use of this emerging assessment technology.

What will be done with the results? Provisional scores from the online tests will be provided to the schools within 48 hours of the administration for instructional use in the classroom. The provisional scores will include a number correct score on the multiple-choice items and scores on essay and constructed response items organized by Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs). The online essay scoring will be done by computer using the Pearson Knowledge Technologies' (PKT) Intelligent Essay Assessor™ automated essay scoring engine. All written responses will also be scored by traditional human scoring. Student written responses that are scored by the computer will be considered estimates and the human scoring will be used to produce the final score.

Conventional scaled scores based on post-equating and traditional human scoring of the constructed response items will be provided at the same time as the regular paper reporting. Scaled scores, proficiency levels, and hand-scored essay and constructed response results will be reported along with all other 6th grade students during regular

paper reporting. If differences between computer and human scoring on written responses are found, we will make all reasonable adjustments for differences in the two modes of scoring so that the online scores will be comparable to paper test scores.

An equating process will be employed based on the performance of an equivalent matched group of students from the regular MEAP test. This is a commonly-used design for studying whether scores based on online and paper administrations of the same test are comparable.

Is automated essay scoring accurate? Research using the PKT essay scoring system has shown it to be accurate, reliable and cost-effective. Hand-scoring is tremendously expensive and takes up a great deal of assessment resources and teacher time that could be elsewhere used. Additional information about PKT and automated essay scoring can be found at http://www.k-a-t.com/prodIEA.shtml.

Will this take the same amount of time as the paper/pencil MEAP? Experience with the online MEAP from last year and from other states suggests that students take about the same amount of time on online tests as comparable paper-and-pencil tests. However, it may be prudent to allow a little more time for online testing than is allowed for the paper-and-pencil version since it will be a new experience for the students.

What kind of support will I get? There will be a Help Desk managed by PEM that will be able to provide the needed support. In addition, OEAA and PEM will provide training for testing coordinators and other personnel involved in the online test administrations.

Why do this? Michigan schools have a proud tradition of using state-of-the-art teaching and assessment methods. Online testing is just a natural part of using the most effective and efficient and modern testing methods.

We anticipate a great number of advantages to using online administration:

1) students, teachers, and parents will get instructionally relevant feedback within 48 hours, rather than several weeks
2) accuracy of the results will be improved because there is less chance for response booklets to be lost or cause other errors
3) administrators are relieved of the tedious and expensive use of staff time for distributing, collecting, checking, and returning testing materials
4) substantial savings in resources are expected;
   a. much less paper is consumed and printed
   b. energy resources are saved - less mailing of thousands of pages of paper back and forth saving fuel and labor costs.
5) recent studies of online testing have indicated that students find online testing to be more enjoyable and engaging than traditional paper testing

How do I volunteer my school? You will find on the website (http://www.michigan.gov/meap) a web link called; *Registering for the Grade 6 and 7*

2006 Online MEAP Assessments. Follow that link and fill out the application form and you will be contacted. This is on a first come, first served basis until we fill 5,000 student slots. The deadline for signing up is June 30, 2006. You will be notified if you are in the online program July 1 and again after labor day with specific instructions for training.

What happens after I am selected? You will be notified to attend an information conference or video call in mid-September. There will be three regional training sessions for training administrative procedures. The training will be hands-on and you must bring the test proctor (who can return and train others), one test administrator, and a technology support person to the training.

For further information contact:
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